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SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS COVERAGE ON MIHAJLOV

1. EDITORIAL PAGE OF NEW YORK TIMES MARCH 1 CARRIED ARTICLE BY THOMAS FLEMING, HISTORIAN, NOVELIST AND PAST PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN CENTER OF P.E.N, ENTITLED, "AS MIHAJLOV NEARS DEATH." TEXT FOLLOWS:

--- FOR OVER A DECADE THE WRITER MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV HAS BEEN STRUGGLING TO MAKE THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION PROMISED BY YUGOSLAVIA'S CONSTITUTION A REALITY. THIS HAS LED HIM TO CRITICIZE HIS COUNTRY'S ONE-PARTY SYSTEM AND CONTROLLED PRESS. UNABLE TO PUBLISH HIS ARTICLES AT HOME HE SENT THEM ABROAD, WHERE THEY APPEARED IN A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS, AMONG THEM THE NEW YORK TIMES.

--- IN 1975, MR. MIHAJLOV WAS SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS' HARD LABOR FOR DISSEMINATING "HOSTILE PROPAGANDA" AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA. HE WAS PLACED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN A VIRTUALLY UNHEATED PRISON CELL AND DENIED BOOKS AND WRITING MATERIALS. VISITS FROM HIS WIFE AND LAWYER HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO THE VANISHING POINT. IN DESPERATION, HE BEGAN A HUNGER STRIKE IN DECEMBER. TODAY HE IS NEAR
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DEATH.

--- THE AMERICAN CENTER OF P.E.N. AS PART OF ITS COMMITMENT TO FREE EXPRESSION EVERYWHERE HAS TRIED TO PERSUADE THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT MR. MIHAJLOV TO EMIGRATE TO THIS COUNTRY, WHERE A TEACHING POST HAS BEEN OFFERED HIM. MARSHAL TITO HAS STONILY REFUSED, IGNORING PLEAS FROM OVER 40 DISTINGUISHED UNITED STATES WRITERS. WORSE, THE YUGOSLAVS HAVE LIED ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF MR. MIHAJLOV'S IMPRISONMENT AND THE REASON FOR HIS SENTENCE.

--- TOMA GRANFIL, THE AMBASSADOR OF YUGOSLAVIA, INFORMED P.E.N. BY LETTER ON OCT. 7, 1975, THAT THE REPORT OF MR. MIHAJLOV'S BEING IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT WAS "INACCURATE AND WITHOUT FOUNDATION." THE REST OF HIS LETTER IS WORTH READING IN PART:

--- "M. MIHAJLOV, BY HIS ACTIVITIES THROUGH CONTACTS WITH THE EMIGRE QUARTERS ABROAD, HOSTILE TO THE YUGOSLAV CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER, HAS COMMITTED A CRIMINAL ACT PUNISHABLE UNDER THE YUGOSLAV LAW....THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN PURSUED ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN CENTER OF P.E.N. CANNOT BE CONSIDERED OTHERWISE BUT AS AN ATTEMPT OF POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA.. ..YUGOSLAVIA HAS NEVER SUCCUMBED TO SUCH AND SIMILAR PRESSURES WHEREVER THEY COME FROM. ACCORDINGLY, YUGOSLAVIA WILL NOT SUCCUMB TO THE CURRENT PRESSURES, EITHER. FINALLY, I WONDER WHOSE INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES THIS ORGANIZED AND CONCERTED CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA SHOULD PROMOTE?"

--- IN RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION P.E.N. REPLIED: "WHOSE INTEREST IS SERVED BY KEEPING MR. MIHAJLOV IN JAIL? CERTAINLY NOT YUGOSLAVIA'S INTERESTS. EVERY DAY THAT HE REMAINS IN JAIL, AMERICANS, WHO HAVE LONG BEEN FRIENDS OF YUGOSLAVIA, FEEL THAT FRIENDSHIP COOLING, THEIR ADMIRATION DECLINING."

--- HIS REPLY WAS MORE OF THE SAME RHETORIC AND AN ATTEMPT TO LINK MR. MIHAJLOV WITH TERRORIST ACTS BY YUGO-

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SLAV EMIGRES. ABANDONING DIPLOMATIC NICETIES, P.E.N. TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THIS WAS "BUNK, PURE AND SIMPLE." MEANWHILE, A WRITER WAS DYING. INGERSOLL

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